



Testimony of Ashley Zane
Public Policy Associate, CBIA
Before the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee
Hartford, CT
March 2, 2023
Testifying in support of:

SB 982: AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING HIGHER EDUCATION

My name is Ashley Zane and I am a Government Affairs Associate for the Connecticut Business and Industry Association. CBIA is Connecticut's largest business organization, with thousands of member companies, small and large, representing a diverse range of industries from across the state. Ninety-five percent of CBIA member companies have 100 or fewer employees.

I am here in support of SB 982, *An Act Implementing the Governor's Budget Recommendations Concerning Higher Education*. Specifically, CBIA supports Section 12 of the bill which would permanently eliminate the Office of Higher Education's role reviewing and approving programs at independent nonprofit institutions of higher education. Non-profit, private colleges that are regionally accredited and maintain certain standards have been exempt from academic program approval by the Office of Higher Education in some form since 2016.

One of the great strengths of our current independent schools of higher education is their ability to quickly develop new educational programs that meet the immediate and wide range of needs of industry in their communities. Making this exemption permanent would allow these schools to aggressively and effectively engage with their community employers and respond to workforce training needs.

In addition to training the next generation, Connecticut's employers require highly skilled workers and a workforce that can continue to attain new skills. It is equally important to train incumbent workers quickly and this bill allows our independent schools of higher education to address the demand and strengthen our workforce pipelines.

CBIA urges the committee to vote favorably on Section 12 of this bill.